

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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For Immediate Release
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Smoke-Free Housing Saves Money and Lives

Collier – In an effort to reduce secondhand smoke exposure and increase cost savings, the Florida Department of Health in Collier is encouraging local apartments to implement smoke-free housing policies. In May of 2012, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development re-issued a notice which strongly encourages Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) to implement smoke-free policies in some or all of their public housing units. According to the 2010 US Census Bureau, 48% of Collier County residents live in a multi-unit structure. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cigarette smoking is the number one preventable cause of disease and death in the United States. Children, the elderly, and people who are immuno-compromised are especially vulnerable to the dangerous effects of secondhand smoke. Implementing smoke-free policies can significantly reduce adverse health conditions ranging from asthma to lung cancer.

Containing over 7,000 chemicals, there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Smoking cigarettes in a multi-unit dwelling puts neighbors at risk because it is possible for secondhand smoke to travel by way of air ducts, electrical outlets, windows, garbage disposals and balconies. The only way to eliminate risk of exposure is by implementing a smoke-free policy. Policies such as smoke-free apartments, outdoor spaces, pool decks, and common areas all protect the health of residents and increase the safety of the community.

Besides protecting the health and safety of residents, smoke-free policies save money. According to a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the estimated annual cost savings from eliminating smoking in all U.S. subsidized housing would be \$521 million. The majority of those savings would come from reduced healthcare costs related to secondhand smoke. Similarly, smoke-free policies in non-subsidized public housing save millions of dollars per year, as well. The total annual savings for non-subsidized public housing would be about \$154 million a year, including \$101 million from health care costs related to secondhand smoke exposure, \$32 million from renovation expenses, and \$21 million from smoking-attributable fire losses.

Demand for smoke-free housing is increasing nationwide however, there is a shortage of multi-unit housing options for people who want to, or, for health reasons, need to live in a smoke-free environment. 84% of Collier County residents are tobacco-free, therefore, a smoke-free apartment option could be viewed as an amenity that would appeal to the majority of residents, as well as provide a competitive advantage for a property manager to go smoke-free. The Florida Department of Health in Collier partners with property managers and owners to provide free resources, materials and technical assistance to help develop and implement smoke-free policies. Tools such as model lease language, tobacco cessation materials, signage and tenant letters are available at no cost. For more information call 239.252.2672.

ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA

Tobacco Free Florida is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. The program is managed by the Florida Department of Health, specifically the Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida.

ABOUT THE TOBACCO-FREE COLLIER PARTNERSHIP

The Tobacco-Free Collier Partnership is comprised of agencies representing many different sectors of the community including hospitals, non-profit organizations, governmental agencies, medical clinics, educational institutions and community leadership groups committed to making tobacco less desirable, acceptable, and accessible.

Smokers and smokeless tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to learn about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit smoking resources. Visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

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